# California GARDEN

FORTY EIGHTH YEAR | SUMMER 1957 | VOLUME 48, NO. 2

Photograph by James H. Moller

STAGHORN FERN, *PLATYCERIUM GRANDE*

Grown by Mrs. Charles Calloway, of La Jolla, California

Photographed in lathhouse of Marshall Gresham, Encinitas, California
For more about this plant family, see leading article inside

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SAN DIEGO FLORAL ASSOCIATION, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

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## CALIFORNIA GARDEN

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Wanted: Back issues of California Garden from 1909 to 1916 and Spring, 1952. Please send to Miss Alice M. Greer for files.

The Floral Building and library will be open every Tuesday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., to members and the public. Mrs. Kenneally will be available for consultation.

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Special entertainment program.
Adjournment until September.

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Tickets $2.50 each. Attendance limited.
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Admission free.

### Garden Clubs — Notice

Affiliate membership in the San Diego Floral Association is available to all garden clubs within the city limits of San Diego. Annual dues of $10.00 entities an affiliate to representation on the executive board of the Floral Association, two subscriptions to California Garden, and week-end flower shows in the Floral Building. An additional fee of $15.00, for the building maintenance fund, entitles an organization to the use of the building for meetings and to the use of another building in the park for a flower show. Garden clubs interested are asked to write a letter petitioning affiliate membership.

**Membership** in the San Diego Floral Association includes a subscription to California Garden. Classification of memberships: Annual, $3.00; Family, $5.00; Sustaining, $5.00; Contributing $25.00, and Life Membership, $100.00. Memberships and gifts are deductible from income tax.

# California Garden

FORTY-EIGHTH YEAR SUMMER, 1957 VOL. 48, NO. 2

# *Platycerium*
# *Plant Gems of Ancient Heritage*

Frank Quintana

A goodly part of the joy of gardening derives from the happy palaver between gardeners. A gardener is probably happiest, when in the hope of arousing a similar enthusiasm in his audience, he launches into an expository monologue about a particular plant interest. And that, My Dear Children, is why Garden Magazines were born!

The gardener turned author is probably UNhappiest when faced with the proposition of addressing himself to "What's New in the Garden" for the thirty-seventh time. Just for a switch, then, let's look at a couple of antiquities.

Nurserymen friends have reported that there appears to be a resurgence of interest in ferns. This intelligence has prompted me to stump for a family of ancients which fits the circumstances nicely. I believe that the most bizarre and fascinating of the ferns are the Platycerium, the so-called "staghorn" ferns. The botannical name, derived from the Greek, is compounded of *platy*, meaning broad, and *keras*, meaning horn. It is ideally descriptive for the reason that the plants exhibit fronds which are promptly reminiscent of antlers. Because of their unusual appearance and their unique habit of epiphytic growth, these ferns may be depended upon to excite comment and conversation on the part of all visitors to the garden where they are grown.

The Platycerium comprise a small group of plants of rather widely scattered habitat throughout the sub-tropical and tropical regions of the world. Some are found in temperate Australia, others in the Malay archipeligo, and the Philippines, in Africa, and one species is found in the South American Andes. The genus is readily recognized, made distinct by the repeatedly forked character of the fertile fronds.

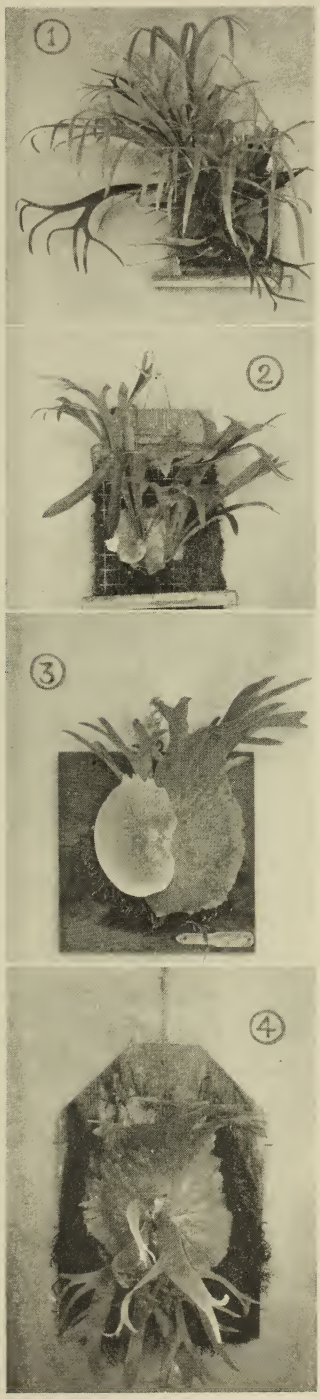
Having introduced this term "fertile fronds," it should be pointed out immediately that the plants produce BOTH fertile and infertile fronds, each type of a distinctly different, but harmonious architecture. The fertile fronds are antler-like, and carry the spore in splotches, usually on the underside of the leaf extremity. The barren or infertile fronds tend to a rounded, shield-like shape, and usually grow in rather symmetrical, opposite pairs, pressed back flatly convex against the growing media, and conforming to the container shape. These persistant barren fronds or scales gradually fade from their original green, becoming brown and imbricate. They protect a mass of stems and roots, and collect a composting debris which helps to nourish the plant. From a point where these leaves intersect, somewhat tangentially, the fertile fronds arise and arch out.

Alfred Hottes, a person whose patent charm made it seem iconoclastic to fractionate his conversational ramblings into fact or fancy, explained to me that the Platycerium were something of "a missing link" in the evolution of ferns. He went on to say that when fern spore is sown today, there first develops a flat shield-like body which is called a thalli or gametophyte. From this primary green body, the true fern arises and develops. Thereupon, the thalli disappears and is not seen again till

Cover Picture: Cynthia Gray Calloway stands beneath her *Platycerium grande* to help convey some idea of its stately dimensions.

When she first obtained the plant, 25 years ago, it was about the size of a bread and butter plate. Presently, measured horizontally through the plant's "equator," is it 4 ft., 8 in. in periphery. The barren fronds measure almost 5 ft. from lower to upper leaf extremity. The fertile fronds of this plant have not yet developed fully, being this year's growth. However, the spore-bearing disc is complete. It is triangular in shape, with a distance of 18 in. from its apex to its 24 in. base. When fully developed, the entire frond will measure from 3½ to 4 ft. in over-all length.

The color of the fern is light green, except for the newest barren frond, now developing, which is covered with a deciduous greyish down.




the sowing of the next generation of spore. Hottes maintained that the Platycerium, in hanging on to the flat shield-like barren frond, so reminiscent of the thalli, did represent a transition between older fern forms and present day subjects. He felt, therefore, that these odd ferns had a heritage of great antiquity.

In the support of this contention, Elise Hoffman of the University of Vienna reported the identification of fossilized spore of the Platycerium in sandstone of the Cretaceous period, which would indicate that this plant family has been with us for about a hundred million years. Willy-nilly, staghorn ferns have held the interest of botanists for more than two and a half centuries. In 1705, Plukenet reported a sterile African plant with the designation, *Neuroplatyceros aethiopicus.*

CULTURE

Altogether there are about seventeen or eighteen species of staghorns. Authorities usually call them glasshouse plants, but most of the common varieties are satisfactory lathhouse subjects along the coastal belt of Southern California. These may also be grown in a protected patio area or integrated in a partially shaded garden area. The staghorn ferns are epiphytic in nature, so they need no soil. They prefer a mixture of sphagnum moss and rough peat fiber, or sphagnum alone. Shredded fir bark and sphagnum would make an ideal media. They are especially effective when planted in the crotch of a tree, or in wall baskets. When grown in a regular wire hanging basket, these ferns (especially *P. alcicorne*) will throw roots throughout the growing media, and in time, will develop a solid ball of plants completely surrounding the container, displaying antlers which arch out in every direction. The effect is nothing short of remarkable. In more humid locations, as in Hawaii, the plants are often merely nailed to a tree with a backing of moss to start them off. The old barren fronds, soon build up a compost in which the fern grows quite happily.

The Platycerium will tolerate strong light, but prefers it filtered. Some authorities recommend drying out to the point of wilting before watering, but it would be better to maintain an adequate supply of moisture at all times. Fertilizing with soluble fish, or other prepared concentrates (Folium, Soluble Vigoro, Liquinox, etc.) at regular intervals is appreciated by the plant. It is probably wisest to use at *half* the strength recommended on the label. Two or three times a year one enthusiast I know places clods of dairy manure in staghorn baskets, and reports satisfactory results.

PROPAGATION

Platycerium may be propagated by division of young plants produced from the adventitious buds on their roots (sucker growths). *P. grande* is one species which does not produce off-sets, and must be propagated by means of spores. This method is agonizingly slow, but effectively productive. Asexual propagation involves cutting out (a sharp kitchen knife is the best tool) a set of antlers together with a goodly portion of barren fronds. Taking of a circle of at least four inches in diameter, and several layers thick, will insure a sufficient root system. This amputa-

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We are indebted to Alvin F. Koenig, an ardent fern enthusiast of Pacific Beach, California, for the privilege of choosing four pictures from several of his large collection of Platycerium species. Most of the plants shown are around two years old. A foot rule indicates the size of the two upper specimens. The lower ones are each mounted on a board, twelve inches wide. Photos by R. B. Axt.

Platycerium identification follows: (see Key for description)

1. *P. alcicorne* var. *majus*
2. *P. hilli*
3. *P. coronarium*
4. *P. willenckii*

## KEY TO THE PLATYCERIUM GENUS

As mentioned earlier, there are some 17 or 18 valid species of the Platycerium family. Were it not for the confusion in nomenclature and in classification caused by earlier writers, it would be a simple task to report the subject. Fortunately these differences hastened the development of a synopsis and key to the majority of the Platycerium genus, which is included below. This key is adapted from an argument by L. M. Underwood, which appeared in the Bulletin of the Torrey Botanical Club, 1905, p. 587, in which a generic name other than Platycerium was defended.

SYNOPSIS OF THE SPECIES.

Fertile fronds broad, with no narrow strap-like division.

Fertile fronds rounded at apex, with entire margins: sporangial area oval: barren leaves erect. *P. angolense*

Fertile fronds more or less lobed at the apex.

Apex with two rounded lobes; margins otherwise entire; sporangial area kidney shaped. *P. Ellisii*

Apex with irregular margins showing tendency to fork; sporangial areas irregular in shape following leaf outline; barren leaves thick, with deep irregular pits when dry. *P. madagascariense*

Fertile fronds with narrow strap-like lobes, resembling a stag's horn.

Sporangial areas on a stalked scutiform disc (scutiform = shield-shaped) *P. coronarium*

Sporangial areas on undersurface of fertile frond.

Sporangial areas at or below the forks, and not on the strap like lobes of the leaf.

Sporangial areas on an enlarged basal portion of the fertile frond. *P. grande*

Sporangial areas at the sinus of the second fork of the fertile frond.

Basal leaves (barren) lacinate into strap-like lobes; sporangial areas oval, on modified portion of fertile frond. *P. Wallichii*

Barren leaves undulate or entire at margin: sporangial area triangular on unmodified surface of fertile frond. *P. Stemmaria*

Sporangial areas on the narrow strap-like lobes of the fertile frond, only exceptionally extended below sinus.

Fertile fronds rigid, erect in growth, gradually widening upwards and then forming several lobes or divisions.

Bright green both sides: sporangia bearing divisions broad 5-8 cm). *P. Hillii*

White both sides, but becoming greenish above. Sporangia bearing divisions narrow (2.5 cm or less wide) *P. Veitchii*

Fertile fronds pendant in growth.

Sporangial areas on or near apices of lobes.

Barren leaves erect and leafy: Fertile leaves many times forked. *P. Willinckii*

Barren leaves remaining flat and disc-like: fertile leaves 2-3 forked. *P. alcicorne*

Sporangial areas medial on fertile fronds. *P. andinum*

Other valid species include *P. wandae, P. ridleyii, P. vassei, P. wilhelminae-reginae, P. sumbawense, and P. lemoinei.* Of these, *P. sumbawense* is questionable.

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tion may be placed directly in the container in which it is to grow.

Platycerium spore is handled much the same as any other fern spore. A simple method is to sow it on a layer of wet (not moist, *WET*) sphagnum moss contained in a commercial-size mayonnaise jar. Once sown, the lid should be screwed tightly on the jar, and the whole business placed in a warm greenhouse. Leave it alone until the plantlets are big enough to handle. The larger they are, the better the chance of success at the critical time of transplanting. Patience, please! The first stages may take as long as two years.

If you enjoy being utterly scientific, plant the spore in a nutrient solution where the ferns will develop faster than in soil or moss.

Nutrient solution:

| | |
|---|---|
| Ammonium Nitrate | 0.5 grams |
| Monobasic Potassium Phosphate | 0.2 grams |
| Magnesium Sulfate | 0.2 grams |
| Calcium Chloride | 0.1 grams |
| Ferric Chloride | TRACE |
| (40 drops of 1% solution) | |
| *Distilled* water to make | 1000 cc. |

A half pint of this solution is placed in a pint jar. A cap is made of NONabsorbent cotton, the glass top is placed over it lightly, and the jar is sterilized, as for canning. When finished and cool, sow the spore from the tip of a small knife which has been sterilized by passing thru a flame. Cover tightly, label, and put away in a warm, shady location. When ferns are large enough to be transplanted, remove from the jar with a hooked wire, and plant in sphagnum.

In connection with planting spore, I feel moved to tell a story. Once, when Mrs. Calloway's *P. grande* was "fruiting," I requested some spore. She advised me, before harvesting it in quantity, to wait until a small amount held in my palm would "wiggle." Seeing the startled disbelief in my expression, though I swear I tried to hide it, she assured me, rather coldly, that this intelligence had been given to her by some university horticulturists. With the zeal of an agnostic, I made periodic pilgrimages to the plant, hopelessly scratching small samples of spore into my palm, and sourly observing no trace of a wiggle. Finally, to my total amazement (and joy), there came a day when

the brown powder did indeed leap about in my hand. I harvested it, planted it, and it yielded.

Later I came upon the explanation. The spore cases are constructed rather like a fiddlehead, and as the spore ripens, a strain is developed along the outside edge of the curved case. Nature, in her craftiness, planned that the case should rupture violently (on a microscopic scale) thus casting the spore out as far as possible. In the warmth of my palm, the cases ruptured, and thus appeared to move about, demonstrating that the spore was ripe.

DESCRIPTIONS

To describe some of the species in a more general way, the following text has been adapted from "The Book of Choice Ferns" by George Schneider, a three volume reference work of perhaps greater rarity than some of the plants it describes.

*P. alcicorne* (al-sick-corny)

This is the commonest of the species, owing probably to its easy culture, rapid growth, and facile propagation. According to Lowe, the plant was introduced into Kew Gardens in 1808. Its barren fronds are rounded and flatly convex, with edges slightly waved, and spreading lobes that are downy when young. The fertile fronds, 2 to 3 feet long, grow in clusters of somewhat upright habit along part of their length and then become pendant. They are twice or three times forked, and of a thick leathery texture, green above, and downy underneath. The spore is disposed in the last forks and at their bases, in irregular patches.

*P. alcicorne var. majus.* (larger)

In this variety the foliage is much larger and the plant shows a more robust habit. The fertile fronds have broader lobes, held on a stiff flat stalk, from which they droop elegantly, although the frond as a whole is erect. The barren fronds are roundish, convex and overlapping.

*P. stemmaria* (syn. *aethiopicum*)

This species is a native of Western Africa, the Guinea Coast and Angola. Its basal leaves( barren fronds) are stalkless, rounded and convex, undulated and downy when young. The fertile fronds are of a pendant habit and twice divided: the disc and first division are broader than most other kinds and the spore occurs in a triangular patch surrounding the sinus between the two horn-like projections. The under surface is covered with a thin white cottony down. The fertile fronds occur in clusters, and are an average of 2-3 feet in length.

*P. grande* (see cover illustration)

This is a magnificent species, native of northern Australia, Singapore and the Philippines. The barren fronds, which may grow to a size of six feet across, are roundish, ascending, and have their upper edges divided into a number of broad blunted segments. They are of a light green coloration, covered with a woolly substance when young, but free of any trace of it when fully developed. The fertile fronds will extend to a length of four to five feet, are of a pendant nature, bearing a repeatedly forked division toward the extremities. These are usually produced in pairs, and are provided with a wedge-shaped disc which becomes covered with the spore. The further extremities remain barren.

HYBRIDS

Staghorn ferns occupied the attention of two San Diego County practical hybridists, Marshall Gresham of Encinitas and the late Charles Cass of Pacific Beach. These gentlemen not only collected various species, but made attemps at hybridizing. Gresham sowed spore of *P. hilli* and *P. alcicorne* var. *majus* together, and from the combination obtained several plants that are not at all typical of either species. The cultivar resulting from this action displays the green upper and under surface characteristic of *P. hilli,* but the more robust growth and heavier texture of *P. a.* var. *majus.* The lobes have fine sharp points rather than the bluntish lobes usually exhibited by *P. a.* var. *majus.*

To the best of my present knowledge, no records are available regarding the parentage of the Cass crosses. Some of his plants appear to be quite different from other members of the family. The fronds have a heavy leathery texture, are generally erect and thickly clustered, broadly widened at the area where the blunt lobes develop. The lobes are twice-divided, and are handsomely pendant, while the general character of the leaf is erect. The plant suggests a cross between *P. stemmaria* and *P. alcicorne* var. *majus.* It is completely indifferent to winters in Pacific Beach, where two splendid lathhouse specimens are grown by Edwin Moore.

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# San Diego Garden Center

At long last we have a chance to "dig in" so that later we may "plant." Join the crusade for a Garden Center in San Diego's Balboa Park where there can be an Open Garden every day. Help first by becoming a member of the S. D. F. A., the oldest Garden Club in town, or, if away, by subscribing to California Garden, which is the club Quarterly.

Second, help by bringing your friends to a Garden Fashion Tea at the Ledford home on Point Loma, July 10, at 2 p.m. This will give out-of-town guests a chance to see an estate garden with a sweeping harbor view, glimpsed through specimen trees above a rolling lawn, rare in this climate. Marston's will put on a Parade of Garden Fashions from Work to Wedding time. Refreshments suited to the summer day will be offered to the audience from colorful trays. There will be valuable garden prizes. Attendance is limited. Avoid that "shut-out" feeling by buying tickets early. Call CY 6-2757, CY 8-1400 or CY 5-6290 for more information.

Third, help by volunteering for service at the S. D. F. A. Garden Booth at El Mercato, Old Town Plaza, during Fiesta del Pacifico, and by telling everyone you know about it. There, garden club members may enjoy answering questions and exchanging experiences with other garden lovers who may come and bring their tourist friends to see novelties, dish gardens, cacti and succulent plants, garden helps and accessories for those who have, or crave to have, green thumbs. There will be demonstrations of corsage making and flower arranging from time to time. Fun and information for all.

If you have taken the three steps mentioned above, with the right fervor, the rest of the steps will follow quickly when a winding grapestake fence encloses the chosen area for the Garden Center, under the trees by your patio door. A picnic terrace for the summer suppers before concerts or operas, beneath the soft lights of lanterns, should be an early item. Then there will be plots to plant to study our favorite flowers as well as a lathhouse and potting benches to demonstrate the care of shade plants.

Help us "dig deep," but fast!

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There is some real argument among local collectors as to whether the above-mentioned plants are really hybrids. Hybridization with ferns is a chancy business at best, depending upon the union of sexual parts of mature thalli of two different ferns. This implies being close enough, being of exactly similar age and development and being under the precise conditions necessary to permit a greater than normal movement of the archegonia (sperm cell). It would seem that the odds are against successful hybridization. In support of the claim, however, Vernon Young, writing in the *Gardener's Chronicle* of Nov. 1935, makes mention of "natural hybridization" in a straightforward way, and without qualification. "In some cases," he says, "the sperm which unites with the egg may come from a different plant, since the prothallia (of different ferns) often grow in groups in desirable moist places."

Thus, a fertile field of information permits the controversy on staghorn hybrids to grow. Colloquy notwithstanding, the variants are handsome items, worth the effort of searching them out and growing them.

## AVAILABILITY

Comparatively speaking, staghorns are uncommon plants. *P. alcicorne* has a general circulation among seriously interested gardeners, and is usually available at better nurseries. It is sometimes sold under the synonym, *bifurcatum*. Less frequently, *P. grande* is seen, and sometimes *P. stemmaria* and *P. alcicorne* var. *majus* occur in collections of enthusiastic amateurs. Other fern species may be found in glass houses, and may also be ordered by mail from A. B. Cutler Nursery, Miami, Fla.; Julius Roehrs Co., of Rutherford, New Jersey; Alberts & Merkel Bros. Nursery in Jacksonville, Florida, and from Rudolf Ziesennenne, of Santa Barbara, California. Locally, *P. alcicorne, P. grande* and some others are on sale at a few specil nurseries in San Diego County.

## REFERENCES

Lowe, "Ferns, British and Exotic"; Schneider, "The Book of Choice Ferns"; Nicholson, "Dictionary of Gardening"; Hooker, "Species Filicum"; Copeland, "Genera Filicum"; Beddome, "Ferns of British-India"; Britten, European Ferns"; Bailey, "Standard Cyclopedia of Horticulture."

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# *Garden Fillers of Special Merit*

Roland S. Hoyt

BURMA LEADWORT

A tough general purpose plant that is being overlooked by the gardening public is the Burma Leadwort, *Ceratostigma griffithi.* This is for those who do not mind a couple month's bare stems, or who are willing to accept such in the light of the brilliant late fall coloring that precedes.

This plant is shrubby, tending to spead out laterally in a strong streaming growth from a tight crown. If this center growth is cut out, the side shoots will be forced out to considerable length so that a cover or drape for a bank is formed. It stands quite some drought, heat and poor soil. Normally 3-4 ft. in height. The pale blue flowers appear a little late for a leadwort, August-November, and are rather scattered, not profuse. It wants sun for good blooming, but tolerates some shade.

CANDOLLEA

This plant has been in use for a good many years and with not too much success. Its high interest, beauty and general usefulness call for further and more intelligent trial by gardeners. Give it a hot exposure in the sun, sharp drainage . . . very sharp, and a fairly lean soil and only nominal irrigation and you will be surprised and happy with the result.

*Candollea cuneformis* is shrubby erect, 3-4 ft. at first, later slumping, relaxing, but still a bush. The flowers of February-June are like little yellow wild roses, the petals rolling in on themselves. The large reddish sepals deepen for an added effect while the older, inner leaves turn crimson, an inward-outward haze or dimness of color showing through.

LILY TREE

There is a small tree of some 20-30 ft. in height that might have more consideration at the hands of the planters who want something to put in the lawn or other cover. It has it faults, but the ability to grow in six or eight inches of soil under the moisture conditions of a lawn is a recommend of no mean proportions.

*Crinodendron dependens* has been called at various times "Lily of the Valley Tree" and "Flowering Oak," and with some reason in both cases. But since both names have been used for other plants in the past, it would seem better to simply call it Lily-tree.

The blooming is in May-June or July, small pendent white lily-like flowers throughout the body of the tree, followed by colored fruiting bodies that break open and display the seed, somewhat on the order of bittersweet.

Faults are: a tendency to brushiness, requiring much pruning to keep the center open to light; older leaves drop in drought to mess a lawn . . . use over an open cover, such as ivy; foliage is very dull during winter.

Points are: very rapid growth; sparkling flowers and snapping orange seed capsules; wide adaptation to soil and exposure of very wet ground . . . it likes to drink.

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# EPIDENDRUMS, MINIATURE ORCHIDS

William De Haan

The desire of almost every advanced gardener is to grow something out of the ordinary, something a bit unusual, something that might test the skill and accumulated knowledge picked up in growing the more prosaic things. Orchids are always a challenge, but, when the needs of the tropical varieties are considered, the cost of greenhouses, humidifiers, heaters and other essentials generally entails quite an investment, not even counting the careful attention they usually demand.

Second choice for those who wish to grow orchids, without the cost and special requirements of the Epiphytic types, is the herbaceous Epidendrum group which can be grown right out in the open ground, anywhere where it doesn't freeze too hard. These orchids are hardy to about thirty degrees.

Along the coastal strip Epidendrums can be grown in full sun as well as partially shaded. Inland they prefer afternoon shade or lath conditions.

For many years there were only two colors available, *E. obrienianum,* the flame orange shade, and *E. radicans,* a deep red.

During the past few years the hybridizers have taken an interest in them, and now the color range has been extended to include all shades from white, through the pinks, yellows, oranges, purples, lavenders and reds. It is true that the individual flowers are small but they are perfectly formed. The clusters will sometimes include fifty separate flowers that will last for many weeks and even months.

The blossom heads are often six inches long. They are excellent material for arrangements, corsages, and boutonnieres, as they will keep for several days without water, after being cut. Their flowering season extends completely around the calendar, so a planting of various colors could furnish flowers for almost any occasion, at any time of the year.

The growing of Epidendrums is quite simple. The soil must be of a very loose nature. Regular garden loam enriched with well-rotted manure or some form of organic humus is ideal. During the past year a valuable material for orchid growers has been introduced from the north woods. One supplier puts it in a very attractive package under the trade name of "Forest Humus." Others have it under the name of "Fir Bark," as it is made of chips and shreds of fir and other very acid forest barks. It is highly absorbent, it is definitely acid in reaction, and it is coarse enough to drain quickly. It serves a valuable purpose in the planting of any orchids, especially Epidendrums.

We have found that the heavy salt and alkali content of the Colorado River water has caused some leaf burn and spotting, but it hasn't affected the quantity nor the quality of the flowers.

The Epidendrum plant habit is somewhat rangy and ragged at times, but they adapt themselves readily to training and can be grown as foundation shrubs, in tubs and pots for patio and porch use, as espaliered plants on lattices, walls or fences or any other way that might fit some particular garden spot.

Some colors are reproduced by plantlets that form on the older canes. They can also be grown from seeds which form in capsules in the flower spikes. We have found that the easiest and fastest way to increase the preferred colors is by cuttings or plantlets.

So we repeat, for a step upward on the garden ladder, try Epidendrums. They will reward you many times over for the care you give them.

## A NEW PARK

More of this later, but a pause now to express the appreciation of grateful nature-lovers everywhere to one of our members, Mrs. Ruth Larabee, who has given San Diego County twenty-six acres of hillside beauty, inland from Encinitas, to be known as Quail Park.

When those of us who have lived here but a few years think of the mushroom growth of suburban areas that is swallowing up the hills inland from our coast, a section such as that offered by this new park could soon be an oasis in a citified desert.

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# *Let's Grow Mums*

David R. Roberts

We all like to do something better than average. Most gardeners in this area have grown average chrysanthemums. The production of exhibition mums requires just a little more patience, attention, and cultural knowledge. The magnificent blooms more than repay for the added effort they require.

It has been my pleasure to take part in the production of from 700 to 1000 exhibition chrysanthemum plants every year for the past five years. I hope that my experiences will help others and create a new interest in growing exhibition mums in this area.

All cultural directions relate to pot grown plants. Less irrigation and fertilization will be required if the plants are to be grown in the ground, other requirements are the same.

Propagation instructions will appear at the end of this article as it is now too late to start plants for this year.

Unless you have your own young plants, visit your favorite nursery and select good quality plants in June. These should have thick, soft stems, be not over six inches tall, and of a variety suitable for disbudding. These varieties are classed as exhibition, incurved, reflexed, spiders, quilled, spoon, etc. In general, any normally grown mum 2½ inches or more in diameter may be a good disbud variety. Disbudded blooms will have a more definite form and clearer color than specimens of the same variety that have not been disbudded.

Mum soil should have a high humus content. Compost or leaf mold should be used abundantly. Soils with a high content of soluble salts will impair the growth of the young plants. For this reason it is well not to use much manure, fertilizer, etc. in the starting mixture. The mixture that follows works well:

2 parts compost or leaf mold
3 parts loam
½ part sand
½ part peat moss

To each bushel of the above mix add:

1 cup Superphosphate
2 tablespoons Potassium Sulfate

A gallon can is a very satisfactory container. A seven inch or larger clay pot can be used, but it will have to be watered more often, as clay pots transpire.

The newly transplanted mum should be pinched back to about four inches. This pinch must be on soft wood and the remaining stems should have several healthy leaves.

Water content of the soil should be checked every day. At first, watering every three or four days may be enough, but as the plants develop they will need more and more water. Soil should become *moderately* dry between waterings.

In four to six weeks, after several branches have developed, place three, four-foot bamboo stakes at equal spaces around the edge of the container. A healthy branch is tied to each stake and then all other branches are removed. One can produce three top quality blooms. If you want smaller blooms you can leave more stems per plant.

About this time the plants should have their first fertilization and again about every three weeks. Chrysanthemums require almost equal portions of nitrogen, phosphoric acid, and potash. Any fertilizer supplying these is satisfactory.

Mums should be sprayed every two or three weeks. A spray containing Malathion, with or without D.D.T., and Chlordane will do a good job. Parzate or Dithane Z-78 can be used for diseases.

All side shoots should be removed from the selected branches before they become too woody. In

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late summer, flower buds will develop at the end of each branch. These buds are of several types. The first bud to develop at the end of the stem is the "Crown Bud." In some varieties "Secondary Crown Buds" will also develop just below the first crown bud. Crown buds have no lateral buds in the axils of the small leaves on their stems. "Terminal Buds" develop from leaf axils a few inches below the crown buds. These buds will produce stems that are higher than the crown buds. Terminal shoots also produce secondary buds below the primary terminal bud.

The selection of the bud to be saved depends on many things. If the crown bud has reached the approximate height desired, I would leave it along with one secondary crown bud. This will give you an extra bud to rely on as the primary bud may not show color. Use the terminal bud if the crown bud is not strong, the stem too short, or if you want a bloom two weeks later than that produced by the crown bud. A flower produced by a terminal bud will have a slightly crooked stem.

Disbudding, like pinching back, is done with the tips of the thumb and the forefinger. The unwanted bud is broken off close to where it joins the stem. Try not to leave a stub in the leaf axil. The younger the side shoot, the easier it is to remove. Be careful not to injure the main stem or leaves. Again, for safety's sake, always leave an extra bud until color shows.

Near the coast, mums should be grown without shade until just before the bud shows color. Then, a net or other contrivance should be used to provide about one half shade. Shade will bring out the color and also protect the blossom from burning. Shading earlier will produce leggy plants and encourage mildew. In inland areas, La Mesa eastward, shade may be necessary the entire season.

When mums are in bloom this fall study the varieties, and select those you would like to grow next year. Consider flower form, growth habit, vigor, height, stem thickness, type of foliage, etc., and time of flowering. All these points are important. For instance, a fine flower with a weak stem is of little use, unless it has unusual form or color to offset the fault. Each year we add a few new varieties to the best of the old. This fall we will be showing the following: Peggy Ann Hoover, early lavender-pink quill; Indianapolis, white incurve; E. C. Swire, two-tone purple incurve; Oriole, yellow incurve; Lavender Dream, lavender spider; D. F. Roy, two-tone bronze incurve; J. W. Prince, pink incurve; Anne, white spider; Keystone, bronze. Collect the varieties you like from the hundreds on the market, and plant them in a well drained fertile spot in your garden. Cut them back to about six inches.

In the spring, new shoots will develop around the base of each plant. Let them grow until March and then cut the whole plant down close to the ground. Give the plants a good fertilization and enough water to encourage succulent growth. When these new stems are about eight inches tall (May 1), take the thickest ones and make tip cuttings about four inches long. Remove the lower leaves and insert the cuttings in clean sand. Do not crowd them. Saturate the sand with water from below and place the cuttings in a cool place with a little more than one-half shade.

Do not water them more than absolutely necessary. In about four week the cuttings will have rooted. At that time they should be planted in three-inch pots and left to get established for three or four weeks before moving to larger containers.

Late propagation coupled with steady unchecked growth will produce sturdy plants about 24 to 40 inches tall, depending on variety.

Don't get discouraged. It's not as hard as it sounds. Just follow directions a step at a time and let's see those exhibition mums next fall.

## TREES OF SAN DIEGO

### PIGMY PALMS

C. I. Jerabek

One of the most attractive of the dwarfer palms is *Phoenix roebeleni, (P. humilis lowieiri)*, commonly called Pygmy Palm. It is a feather-leaved type, distinguished by leaves whose narrow segments are so fine and soft as to appear almost fern-like.

The specific name was given in honor of Mr. Roebelin who discovered it in 1880 in Siam. The first specimen to find its way to America was sold to Mr. Nililein of Chicago, for the sum of 500 dollars.

Today, it is widely used in patios or lawns and often in planter boxes. It should never be placed closer to a foundation than three feet, and four would be better. This is necessary in order to give the crown room to spread naturally to achieve its characteristic graceful appearance.

There are many good single-trunked specimens in San Diego, but, to this date, I have discovered only one that is branched. This is at 4220 Palmetto Way, in the Mission Hills district. It had so many branches that it became top-heavy. To save the plant the owner placed a large stone under the leaning trunk, to keep it more upright. Now, as you drive by, you look into the heart of the palm, which gives it a shrub-like appearance.

Good single-trunked specimens can be found at the following addresses: 1231 Myrtle Way, 3262 Grape St., S. W. cor. 3415 Pershing Ave. There are two each at 1840 Lyndon Rd., 5168 Bristol Rd., and at 4290 Middlesex, in the same district.

# *Pioneer Roses*

Rose Davidson

The "Rose of Castile" and the "Castilian Rose" are proud names locally attached to two common varieties of pink roses; or, at least, they used to be so attached. These were the single crowned wildflower, claimed by some writers to be known all over the world; and a very sweet, rather rare, rather double pink, which was a favorite of Old Town's oldest dooryard gardens. *Rosa Californica* was the wild one, wasn't it? The other, according to early botanists, was the true *Rosa Gallica.*

Fr. Junipero Serra, first president of the Franciscan Missions of California, seems to refer to the familiar countryside bush and its bloom, when, writing "home" to the College of San Fernando, Mexico, July 9, 1769, he says:

"In various arroyos along the road (he means a thin Indian trail!) and in the place where we are now (San Diego — the Spanish camp at the foot of Presidio Hill), besides wild grapevines, there are various roses of Castile. In fine, it is a good country . . ."

Was it *Rosa Californica* that so delighted San Diego's earliest enthusiast? He was not alone among Spanish pioneers in misnaming the plant. Don Miguel de Costansó, engineer, describing San Diego river in the middle of May, 1769, wrote in his diary:

". . . In the lower part of the valley there are some large live oaks, and many very leafy wild grapes and Castilian roses loaded with flowers."

The wild variety this was of course, Fr. Serra's "Rose of Castile." Costansó also left this record:

"Within the grove (at San Diego) was a variety of shrubs and odoriferous plants, as the Rosemary, the Salvia, the Rose of Castile . . . The country was of joyous aspect . . ."

The true Castilian rose, *R. damascena trigintipetala,* (we have been told is its right name) is supposed to have come from the Orient by way of Spain and southern Europe. Some say that it was introduced into California by the Mission Fathers, or early Spanish military settlers at the presidios. "A generation ago," an anonymous writer sets forth, "this delightful species was found luxuriantly near all or most of the Missions . . . one of the most valuable for garden planting quite apart from the fact that it is one of the oldest roses known. Its distinct, attractive foliage, its utter disregard for neglect or drought, its habit (unlike most rose species) of blooming continuously, and its delicious old-fashioned fragrance (for it is the source of our attar of roses) mark it as perhaps the most attractive and interesting of all Species Roses for the California garden."

Someone recently complained that the wild variety of our "Rose of Castile" is disappearing. Not long ago we ran upon a well-grown thicket on Padre Barona Indian reservation. And elsewhere in this County linger similar clumps, "with an unforgettable apple-smelling foliage, with very appealing rosy-pink, small, single flowers." An unidentified newspaper clipping says, "It's the apple-scented foliage . . . that is the thing to get excited about, rather than the blooms."

And of the garden variety we recall that twenty years ago, before the development of rose culture had reached its present marvellous proportions, there was at least one ancient "Castilian Rose" blooming in Old Town. Its thick rather pale pink blooms sweetened a corner in the patio of Ramona's Marriage Place, Casa de Estudillo, where the late Tommy Getz pointed it out to us. Miss Fidelia Woodcock, noted authority, named it *Rosa Gallica.*

## CASTILIAN

When Serra came a trail flower
greeted him;
A little blossom loved of suns and
dews,
A bush which every scented summer knows
In Spain unto this day. As in a
dream
He warmed his homesick chill at
its small flame.
How oft this fairest wilding thing
that blows
He named! His pink Castilian rose
Made this far pagan fastness seem
less grim.

What is it now? A mountain
fugitive,
That always, flushed and fragrant,
used to stand
By mission wall close to his
gentling hand.
New cities, welcome back this
rustic friend —
Whose beauty eased his heart
homeward from grief!
Because Fr. Serra loved it, let it
live.

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# *Leaves from an Observer's Notebook*

Marion Almy Lippitt

Henry found me huddled on the corner of the lowest step of the doorway leading from the patio to the living room.

The breeze stirred the king-sized leaves of the philodendron beside me just enough to swing me intermittently from sun to shade.

"You look disconsolate," remarked Henry stopping to chat.

"I feel very small-knowing," I replied.

"Sad state," said Henry, sitting down beside me. "Would you like to confide in me once again?"

"Perhaps, under pressure."

"If that's the way you feel I . . . ." Henry started to leave me.

I pulled him down and held his hand.

"Four months ago," I began, "I planted a wonderful patch of Gypsophila . . . . ."

"Gypso who?" questioned Henry with the tried expression in his voice and eyes of "Must we play games?"

"Well, Baby's Breath to you."

"All right, Baby's Breath. What next?"

"Prepare to weep! When my gypsophila came up I did not recognize it. I forgot what I had planted, mistook it for a weed, and pulled it all up!"

The corner of Henry's mouth twitched. "Why did you plant it in the first place? Don't answer me. I know . . . . . because you wanted a filler for your bouquets."

I shook my head. "You couldn't be more wrong. I planted it because the directions read, 'Sow the seeds broadcast,' My attention was arrested. It sounded just the way I felt . . . gay and carefree."

"Didn't someone once remark, 'Sow in haste, repent in leisure'?"

"The correct quotation is, 'Marry in haste and repent at leisure,' " I answered.

I looked so woebegone that Henry said soothingly, "Never mind. They both illustrate the old adage, 'Live and learn.' "

"I'm always learning things in the garden," I said straightening up and looking more cheerful. "I know now why I like to garden."

"You mean," outlined my accurate New Englander, "that you now know another reason why you enjoy gardening."

"Have it your way. For whether I've found the one reason or just another reason, the reason is a dilly."

Henry settled himself back on his elbow to listen. He is such a satisfactory listener when not in a hurry. The only difficulty is he is perpetually so full of projects that his listening areas have to be carefully caught, fenced, and cherished.

This time I had hit the jackpot for Henry said with Bing-Crosby relaxation, "Tell me all about it."

"First," I started exuberantly, "there should be no impression without expression. Check?"

"Check," replied Henry.

"Then if one is impressed with the niceness of one's family, one naturally looks about for some form of expression to please them."

"And one finds . . . . ." continued Henry.

"That," I went on, "one can contribute one's valiant labors in the garden to one's family that they may have beautiful dahlias and zinnias in the house come summer."

Henry looked at me so long that I grew restless.

"You don't believe me?" I said defensively.

"Shall I tell you what I really think?" asked Henry.

"Certainly."

"I think you have done it again."

"Done what?"

"Justified yourself."

"Just what do you mean?"

"Well, loving the garden beyond reason, your conscience must be eased for the amount of time you spend in it. Therefore you thought up this rigamarole of no impression without expression."

"I thought, I said pensively, "that I was fulfilling the advice of the Bible."

It was Henry's turn to look apolgetic. "And what does the Bible say?"

It says, "Lift up your heart with your hands."

Getting to his feet, Henry looked down at me with his fantabulous smile and said, "You win again, old dear!"

# Garden Chores

Ada Perry

This is being written on the night before Memorial Day for the Summer issue and you would assume that I am concentrating on my subject. And I am. I'm planning some work on the front yard for Memorial Day morning. Early. That's the way I first remember Memorial Day. People working on their front lawns. Only, because of the flags and the white shirts they were wearing, it seemed more a home loving ritual than any other day. And it really was, wasn't it?

You worry about the tenses in the above. Mrs. Clark, our editor, has enough to do. And Memorial Day is the beginning of summer, so I don't believe we should neglect it in the Summer issue.

Ran into a young man down at the Nursery where I work now who really has confidence in his Nitrohumus product. Lots of salesmen come in and chew the fat and some of them get to the nail-chewing stage, too. For instance, I commented flatly that I liked steer as a source of fertile mulch and that I was not overwhelmed by the performance of this other stuff. What brand did you try, he said, as sweet as pie. Told him. He didn't say what he had was better or best. He explained that his product was sun-cured and the natural mulching effect and other qualities were still there, but sun-sterilized. And that Disneyland was a demonstration of this material's effectiveness. So here is a reminder of a good product for summer planting and mulching. Because a young salesman didn't chew nails. Oh yes, and he also said it breaks down satisfactorily in case that's what your soil needs. I must go up to Disenyland sometime and see — those plants!

Got some low-down on shade trees from one of our old-time and new-time wholesale growers. Been doing it for years and going stronger than ever. He had some beautiful Brisbane Box or *Tristania conferta* lined up in five gallon cans looking so handsome and uniform, and dark green and healthy. It seems to be doing a good job as a street tree and is ordered in lots of 50 or so for this purpose. The point seems to be to feed it decently and the foliagle looks but good. It also can be shaped successfully, according to *Sunset.* Not fond of frost in any quantity or lengthy duration. Incidentally, the boss-man down my way now, says you can do a tree lots of good the first years its planted with liquid fish fertilizer. I mentioned foliage of the wholesaler's trees because he's a good feeder and there are plenty of Tristanias offered for sale and growing in the ground which haven't had the pleasure of associating with "a good feeder."

We talked about Guatamala Holly because it came up in comparison with the Holly Oak — hollies and holly foliage are pretty popular now, you know. Mr. Wholesaler laid it on the line. He hated to see people with a small yard buy a nice holly oak they would have to get rid of because it gets too large. And he considers the Guatamala holly a good solution since it turns out to be a smaller tree. Tell you something. There are folks who think its foliage is prettier than the Holly Oak. It will take a frost or two during the winter but no extended engagements, please. Spray it when you spray the rest of the garden, underneath and all over. The new foliage is beautiful.

I've tossed the word "holly" around and neither of these trees is one. This is the way you pin it down: the Holly Oak is *Quercus ilex;* the Guatamala Holly is *Olmediellia betschleriana.* I'm sorry as I can be but life among the catalogues is like that.

There is an echium which has been named for Alfred Hottes. It is a sky blue rather than an indigo blue and the color is pure. That *Correa magnifica,* the chartreuse Australian fuchsia, gives a different and modern look planted with *Teucrium fruiticans* which is airy and blue and grey. Here's one for us old-timers; masses of blue sea lavender or *Statice perezi* with a Mermaid rose. *Aster frikarti* and *Convolvulus cneorum* look well together and you can border around dwarf citrus or Meyer lemons and Rangpur limes with this silvery white convolvulus and the statice. Don't need watering constantly. The convolvulus can go with the bushy pure mauve *Aster fruticosa,* too.

Ladies, maybe we should take up citrus growing as a hobby. Certainly with the limes, tangerines, tangelos, dwarfs, regulars and bush-grown there is plenty of scope. And besides, that citrus hobbyist who came into the nursery a short time ago looks just like any woman wants to look after that 25 year old limit is reached! I just gaped and wondered if citrus as a hobby did that streamlining and fine skin coloring. I was asking her questions, too. She uses Malathion on the citrus to keep them clean. And to produce extraordinary growth, and fruit, and flavor, she uses Superthrive, that growth hormone produced in Hollywood, which is familiar to most of us who garden and not used by most of us to the best advantage. If you want growth and progress in a plant

# *Editorial Bouquets*

This is nature's most prodigal season. High notes against the sky are the mauve panicles of Jacaranda trees, whose spent blooms leave a blue echo beneath them. The rich greens and dominating whites of magnolia leaves and flowers play another theme. In the same key but in a thinner, lighter mood are the lacy leaves and creamy flowers of the Sweetshade tree, *Hymenosphorum flavum.* Both of these trees add an extra bonus of fragrance to the air. Watch for the golden racemes among the feathery foliage of the *Tipuana tipu* tree.

Bougainvillaea vines now top anything they can clamber over with a riot of pulsating color. Hibiscus flaunt their starlike blobs of color in a palette ranging from palest yellow to deepest red. Other warm tones are brushed in by the rosy bristling staamens of the bottle-brush and deepened by the bronze leaves of the purple plum tree. All summer long the oleanders will burgeon forth with masses of heavy double blooms or with single flower staccatos, in a wide range of gay colors.

All of this reminds me of the "Color Park" that Kate Sessions longed to see in Pacific Beach. This dream is being realized where old-timers least expected it, in the reaches of Mission Bay Park, thanks to the initial efforts of Roland Hoyt, who laid it out. Many of the shrubs and trees mentioned above are planted there and are now large enough to color the picture. Bruce Taylor, formerly with the nursery that stocks this park, should be credited for the radiant display of pelargoniums on a bank of land in a main traffic intersection of the park. These plants have waited a long while for someone to give them a chance to show how effective their masses of color can be, especially in a dry section with salt winds. Fortunately, the highway is so busy where they bloom that the public is not tempted to stop for a few cuttings of these choice geraniums. Low clumps of purple statice color the edges of many plantings. There is also a fine stand of a comparatively new shrub, *Dodonea purpurea*, which is now large enough so that its bronzy willowy leaves make a colorful imprint on the landscape.

The dwarf woody veronicas or hebes are making a fine showing of crisp green leaves with blue flowering tips on each branch—the first time such a planting has ever appealed to me. Another shrub home gardeners do not care for, because it is hard to keep in bounds, is the lantana. The bay area is a perfect place to let it make a good ground cover while its masses of pink and yellow clusters soften stronger colors. The new types of this plant, particularly the prostrate yellow variety, do not grow as rampant.

Another tree-like shrub, *Metrosideros tomentosa*, a great favorite of Kate Sessions, is in its prime now, especially around La Jolla. In the park by the Cove, she planted one that has a handsome open form, which is more attractive than that of two large specimens just beyond the entrance to the Beach and Tennis Club, but the latter have a wonderful exhuberance of bloom, easily seen by the passer-by. Sometimes called the New Zealand Christmas Tree, where it flowers at that time, the holly-like gray-green leaves have a tendency to hide the massed filaments of orange-red bloom, so reminiscent of the red-flowering eucalyptus, now at the height of its seasonal color.

We are happy to introduce two new names to the list of old friends who write for *California Garden.* We have known Mr. De Haan, of Leucadia, as one of our most exact and stimulating speakers at club meetings. Since he feels he has earned a rest in that field, it seemed even better to get some of his up-to-date ideas on paper for our readers. His remarks on Epidendrums are timely, in a little-known department.

You will be hearing more about and from Dave Roberts, because he is now at the helm of the Balboa Park Nursery. Most of us have exclaimed over the handsome chrysanthemums that grace the park in October, the results of many months of long and careful work by his staff. If we follow his directions we should get good results, at least we will appreciate his plants even more.

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from a house plant to a tree, this stuff is quite often the means. I heard a young women with her first garden expressing her satisfaction with the growth of her trees because she was smart enough to use this. The citrus hobbyist got extraordinary response from an old, neglected orange with it. Well, use it if you have the occasion, then.

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